

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03

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R 301521Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0700

INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO

/AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS 143

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

DIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 7477

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR, EG, UR, LY

SUBJECT: ARMS DEAL WITH LIBYA

1. DESPITE THE AL AHAM STORY AND SADAT'S RECENT STATEMENT ALLEGING A SOVIET-LIBYAN SUPER-AGREEMENT ON ARMS, EGYPTIAN EMBASSY OFFICERS HERE ARE OPENLY SKEPTICAL THAT SUCH A MAMMOTH DEAL WAS REALLY STRUCK.

2. ONE EGYPTIAN, AMONG THE BEST INFORMED IN HIS EMBASSY ON MIDDLE EAST AFFAIRS, TOLD THE ITALIAN POLITICAL COUNSELOR MAY 26 (BEFORE SADAT'S STATEMENT) THAT THE SOVIET-LIBYAN AGREEMENT TOTALED 700 MILLION DOLLARS. ACCORDING TO THE EGYPTIAN THE SOVIETS AGREED TO SUPPLY TANKS AND ANTI-AIRCRAFT WEAPONRY.

3. TWO EGYPTIAN EMBASSY OFFICERS IN SEPARATE CONVERSATIONS WITH US MAY 29 SAID THEY COULD NOT UNDERSTAND THE BASIS FOR PRESIDENT SADAT'S CLAIM THAT THE SOVIETS ARE
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TO SUPPLY LIBYA WITH ARMS TOTALING 12 BILLION DOLLARS.

ONE OFFICER, WHO SPECIALIZES IN SOVIET-MIDDLE EAST AFFAIRS, SAID SADAT'S CLAIM APPEARED "UNREALISTIC" AND ADDED THAT HE BELIEVES THE FIGURE IS MUCH LOWER. HE ALSO CLAIMED THE LIBYANS DID NOT AGREE TO PROVIDE THE SOVIETS WITH BASES IN LIBYA ALTHOUGH HE THOUGHT THEY MAY WELL HAVE AGREED TO ALLOW THE SOVIETS TO USE SOME LIBYAN FACILITIES.

4. COMMENT: SOVIET MEDIA HAVE NOT REACTED TO SADAT'S STATEMENT, ALTHOUGH PRAVDA'S ATTACK ON THE ALAHRAM ARTICLE (MAY 27) WAS THE STRONGEST WE HAVE SEEN AGAINST THE EGYPTIAN PRESS SINCE THE OCTOBER WAR. PRIVATELY THE SOVIETS HAVE APPARENTLY BEEN PLAYING DOWN THE IDEA OF A SUPER DEAL. THE ITALIANS TOLD THE FRENCH AMBASSADOR, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT WHEN THE SOVIET-LIBYAN ARMS RELATIONSHIP AROSE DURING ITALIAN MFA DIRECTOR GENERAL DUCCI'S TALKS WITH SYTENKO, SYTENKO SAID THAT SOVIETS HAD SOLD THE LIBYANS ONLY "DEFENSIVE WEAPONS" (A STATEMENT NOT BORNE OUT BY THE REPORTED DELIVERY OF MIG 23 AIRCRAFT AND TANKS TO LIBYA OVER THE LAST YEAR).
STOESSEL

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